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REMARKS

Claims 22 and 26 through 39 were presented for examination in the present application. The instant amendment cancels claims 22 and 26 through 28 without prejudice. Thus, claims 29 through 39 are pending upon entry of the instant amendment, which is respectfully requested.

Claims 22-32 and 35-39 were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,062,910 to Garcera et al (the Garcera '910 patent). Claims 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the Garcera '910 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,849,104 to Garcera et al (the Garcera '104 patent).

Claims 22 and 26 through 28 have been cancelled, rendering the rejection to the same moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to these claims are respectfully requested.

For purposes of clarity, independent claim 29, as well as claims 30 through 35 that depend therefrom, will be discussed later herein.

Independent claim 36 recites a first terminal region having a first outer dimension, a main part having a second outer dimension, where the second outer dimension is larger than said first outer dimension, and a foil reinforcing the first terminal region (emphasis added).

It is respectfully submitted that the Garcera '910 patent does not disclose or suggest the combination recited by claim

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36. Specifically, it is submitted that the Garcera '910 patent does not disclose or suggest a main part that has a larger outer dimension than the terminal region and foil reinforcing the terminal region as recited by claim 36.

Rather, the Garcera '910 patent states:

"Attempts may be made to solve this problem by machining each end of the support so as to make it circularly symmetrical. However this has the effect of reducing the thickness of the 'skin', i.e. the distance between the outer channels and the outside surface of the support.

The object of the present invention is to avoid these drawbacks and to implement an assembly method making it easier to assemble a set of active elements in the end plates of a module, with optimum sealing." See col. 2, lines 5-15.

Applicants respectfully maintain, for purposes of appeal, that the above portion of the Garcera '910 patent does not contain an enabling disclosure sufficient to anticipate independent claim 36. Notwithstanding, it is further submitted that this non-enabling disclosure does not disclose or suggest independent claim 36.

Specifically, the solution of the Garcera '910 patent to the problem of reducing the skin thickness at the ends is to add an extra thickness to make a shoulder. In the Garcera '910 patent, the ends are the same size or larger than the main body prior to this addition of extra thickness. The extra thickness of the shoulder disclosed by the Garcera '910 patent can be constituted by any substance capable of binding well with a support made of ceramic, glass, metal, or carbon, e.g. a polymer. See col. 2, lines 66-68.

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Thus, the Garcera '910 patent recognizes terminal ends that are smaller than the main body as being problematic. The Garcera '910 patent then solves this problem by adding for example, metal, to terminal regions that are the same size or larger than the main body. In other words, the Garcera '910 discloses reducing the size of the terminal region as being undesired and, as a resolution to this problem, discloses adding metal to the non-reduced terminal regions.

However, the Garcera '910 patent does not recognize and, thus, does not disclose or suggest, resolving the problems associated with decreasing the size of the terminal regions by reinforcing the terminal region with a foil as recited by claim 36.

Contrary to the assertion made by the Office Action, claim 36 does not prove that the disclosure of the Garcera '910 patent is enabling. See page 8, lines 1-3 of the Office Action dated August 17, 2004. Rather, the foil reinforcing the terminal region as recited by claim 36 has resolved the non-enabling problems inherent in the disclosure of the Garcera '910 patent.

Therefore, claim 36 is believed to be in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 37 through 39 are also believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the reason that they depend from claim 36. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to these claims are respectfully requested.

Independent claim 29 recites, in pertinent part, at least one of a plurality of ceramic filter elements that has a main part and at least one terminal region, where the at least one

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terminal region has a smaller diameter than the main part. Claim 29 further recites that the at least one terminal region is reinforced at least on a peripheral edge of the at least one terminal region.

Again, the Garcera '910 discloses reducing the size of the terminal region as being undesired and, as a resolution to this problem, discloses adding metal to the non-reduced terminal regions. However, the Garcera '910 patent does not recognize and, thus, does not disclose or suggest, resolving the problems associated with decreasing the size of the terminal regions by providing at least one terminal region that is reinforced at least on a peripheral edge as now recited by claim 29.

Therefore, independent claim 29 is believed to also be in condition for allowance. Claims 30 through 35 are also believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the reason that they depend from claim 29. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to these claims are respectfully requested.

For at least the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Such action is most earnestly solicited.

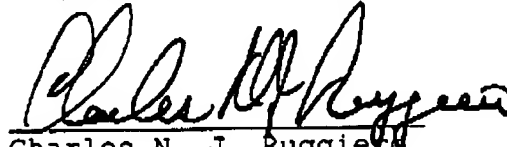
In the alternative, it is believed that the instant amendment places the present application in better condition for appeal. Specifically, the instant amendment merely cancels claims and amends claim 29 to include elements of dependent claim 32. Accordingly, entry and consideration of the instant amendment is respectfully requested.

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If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number below for an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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